

Role of Women Teaching in the Church

Women are able to have the gift of teaching (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:5-8), and women have taught and prayed while with men in biblical texts (Acts 18:26, 21:8-9; 1 Corinthians 11:5); therefore it is reasonable for us to use women as teachers in our church education programs. Because male leadership for the role of Elder is a biblical mandate (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), it is our desire to have other areas of ministry within the church follow the same model, with women participating accordingly with their gifts, as support teachers or workers under the leadership in place.

As long as a woman is not demonstrating arrogance or disrespect for the authority of the church, we see their involvement as a positive blessing to the body. With regards to the 1 Timothy 2:11-12 passage and women teaching in a public worship service, the key issues seem to be the teaching of men or exercising authority over them (vs. 12). The two reasons given for this are:

- The creation order, Adam formed first, then Eve (v. 13).
- Adam was not deceived, but Eve was (v. 14). Note: Both clearly sinned however.

The following are our conclusions:

1. Scripture affirms that women are equal with men as image-bearers of God and in their personal standing before God and the church (Genesis 1:27-28; 5:1-2; Galatians 3:26-28).
2. Scripture affirms that women are distinct in their femaleness from men in their maleness as created and ordered by God (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 11-12).
3. Scripture affirms a basic pattern of functional order applicable to the church in which, under Christ, men are given headship (the task of leadership), and women are to be subject to this leadership (1 Timothy 2:9-14; Romans 13:1-2; 1 Corinthians 11:2-10).
4. Scripture demonstrates that women have unique and significant ministries to fulfill along with men in the church because they are gifted with the same spiritual gifts as men. There are no gender distinctions in the distribution of spiritual gifts (Romans 12:7; 16:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:28-29).
5. Scripture affirms the office of Elder is distinctly open to men only (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). However, we believe that Elders may delegate certain responsibilities to various church members, both men and women, within the framework of biblical church practice (Acts 6:1-6; Romans 16:1-3).

Regarding Deacons, while the same language – “the husband of but one wife” – is used in both 1 Timothy 3:2 regarding Elders and 1 Timothy 3:12 regarding Deacons, we believe there is a distinction in how they are applied. The first seven verses of 1 Timothy 3 refers clearly, and only, to males holding the office of Elder. However, verses 8 through 13, which discuss Deacons, also mention (in verse 11) “their wives” (or, better translated, simply “women”). Since there is no discussion in the first section of the chapter regarding the wives of Elders, we similarly take verse 11 not to mean women who are the wives of Deacons, but rather Deacons who are women.

6. In our interpretation of this principle of submission to authority and teaching of men, Elders can delegate a woman to share her personal life experience and relationship with the Lord, using Scripture to validate such experience. Although she may be clearly gifted in teaching, a woman should not be called on to lead a doctrinal or exegetical study as a part of corporate worship unless partnered with an Elder or Pastor. It is also recommended

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that the woman shares, in advance, with the Elder or Pastor what she plans to teach (1 Timothy 2:9-14; 1 Corinthians 11:2-5; 14:26).

7. In other settings, such as Adult Bible classes or Bible studies where both men and women attend, to apply the principles of 1 Timothy 2, it is recommended that a woman only teach where she is clearly under the authority of the teacher or host of the class. Where possible, it is preferable to have the husband and wife teach together.